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TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN

A Play Pageant
for a Garden in One Act

BY
CONSTANCE WILCOX
PRINCESS PIGNATELLI

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TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN

A
PLAY PAGEANT
FOR A GARDEN IN ONE ACT

BY
G. Grenville
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MY FATHER

FIRST PRODUCED IN MADISON, CONN.

Copy of the original program:

Told in a Chinese Garden

A STORY IN ONE ACT

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Tai-Lo (a gardner on the estate of Wang-Chu-Mo)	-	-	-	T. Skinner
Poa-Ting-Fang. (Guest of Wang-Chu- Mo)	-	-	-	G. Scranton
Wang-Chu-Mo	-	-	-	E. Gorden
A page	-	-	-	E. Wiener
Li-Ti (daughter of Wang-Chu-Mo, affianced to Poa-Ting-Fang)	-	-	-	A. Scranton
Ling-Tai-Tai (Governess to Li-Ti)	-	-	-	A. Chapin
Lang-Tai-Tai (Governess to Li-Ti)	-	-	-	M. Wiener
A Guard	-	-	-	E. Wiener
A Scribe	-	-	-	C. E. Hill

RUNNERS

F. Dowd P. Harts C. Bigelow M. Hill E. Chapin

UMBRELLA BOYS

E. Butterworth G. Cody

The Scene. A Chinese garden.

Time. A Summer afternoon.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1918

A collection will be taken for the benefit of the New Haven Base Hospital for soldiers wounded in France.

TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN

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(A PLAY PAGEANT)

SCENE. *A Chinese garden.*

TIME. *A summer afternoon.*

CHARACTERS

TAI-LO, *A Gardener on the estate of Wang-Chu-Mo.*

POA-TING-FANG, *Guest of Wang-Chu-Mo.*

WANG-CHU-MO.

LI-TI, *Daughter of Wang-Chu-Mo.*

LING-TAI-TAI, *Governess to Li-Ti.*

LANG-TAI-TAI, *Governess to Li-Ti.*

TWO GUARDS.

SCRIBE.

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(The Songs are all Old Chinese — and also the quotations)

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TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN

A STORY IN ONE ACT

***T**AI-LO is working with clippers at a flower bed around a goldfish pool in the center of the garden. He wears a peaked straw hat and faded blue jacket and trousers. He sings at his work.*

TAI-LO

“The flower fairies bring
Their playmate spring;
But the spring goes
And leaves the rose.
She fills all hearts
With incense and departs.

“The river fain would keep
One cloud upon its breast,
Of the twilight flocks that sweep
Like red flamingoes fading west,
Away, away,
To build beyond the day.

“Give me the green gloom of a lofty tree,
Leaf and bough to shutter and bar
My dream of the world that ought to be
From the drifting ghosts of the things that are;

Mine is the secret land where spring
And sunset clouds cease wandering."

(POA-TING-FANG and WANG-CHU-MO advance slowly down the path and into the garden. They are in gorgeous embroidered coats and scarlet and black hats with long tassels. A servant shields them from the sun with a bright, many-colored silk umbrella. They carry fans.)

POA

(With a stately wave of his hand as they walk around the pool)

As I have frequently observed, a garden is soothing to the eye — the flowers are like the many-colored moving disks of the counting board as they shine in the sun — I was ever fond of a garden in which to prepare my accounts — so warm, so undisturbed —

WANG

I had learned of your Excellency's preference — and you will find that my daughter Li-Ti — your most subservient wife-to-be — has the history of each flower at her finger tips. I have had her trained four hours every day in this very garden so she may be able to recite for your Excellency's delectation when she walks her honorable wifely paths in your garden.

POA

Most erudite and solicitous host and father-in-law-to-be, the sun is no more warm on my back than your words in my ears. My late brother (may the Gods

grant him peace in heaven) took delight in his garden, and since I have come into his house and possessions, I have been pleased to add new blooms, one from each country, and cunningly intermingled like the enamel on a Ming vase. It is on view Thursdays and Saturdays — for a mean consideration.

(They come upon the gardener. He bows so low that his sun hat completely hides his face; and, picking up his basket, he goes to a distant flower bed.)

And gardeners — I have thousands — like brown-legged storks — and their wages — they will pick the pennies from my eyelids.

WANG

My daughter will have much to learn in your great household, and I have taught her to imbibe silently, and speak not until there are wise words in her mouth. As the Sage says, "A woman with a long tongue is a flight of steps leading to calamity."

POA

(Picking a flower with a great air)

I myself am a man of few words and many affairs.

WANG

Yes, again to quote: "Love of knowledge without the will to learn, casts the shadow called Instability. Love of goodness without the will to learn casts the shadow called Foolishness. Love —"

POA

Exactly, exactly. Now about the great scarlet bed that is part of your daughter's dowry — may I say that it is of an admirable richness and if there were silken quilts —

WANG

There — there are. They are to be carried to-night in the wedding procession on blue lacquered tables of great value — ten coolies it will take to carry them — and the household utensils and camphorwood chests —

POA

(Jotting down the items in a notebook)

Excellent, O excellent and generous, O my father-in-law-to-be. It is indeed fortunate that a propitious omen is about to bring our two great houses together. I would welcome your daughter were she as sharp as the vicious Aunt East Wind — which I am sure she is not.

WANG

My daughter is far from ill-favored. But as one has said, "Beauty without the will to —"

POA

It does not matter. It is of an insignificance. I remember too, "Admirable is the wise woman, but she is an owl." As befitting a man of affairs my wife and I will meet but seldom, and as you say she has the gift of silence. How does the verse go?

"The wise man's wisdom is our strength,

The woman's wisdom is our bane.
The men build up the city walls
For women to tear down again."

WANG

It rests my ears to hear that you are fond of poetry.
Do you know —

POA

Ah, I remember the sequence,

"No man from any woman's wit
Hath yet learned aught of any worth,
For wise is she, but unto ill,
To bring disorder on the earth.
What does she in affairs of state?
Her place is in the inner room.
Her wisdom doth least hurt in this,
To mind the silkworm and the loom."

But enough of the arts. Were there not perhaps
screens?

WANG

Of purple colored teakwood, set with silver and
ivory, and hangings of orange brocade hand painted
with dragons.

POA

A good omen — a good omen.

(They go off slowly talking.)

*(A little boy in livery enters running. He
peers about the garden and runs back to hold
aside the shrubbery for a gilded, canopied chair*

carried by coolies. In the chair is LI-TI, her scarlet and gold gown stiff with embroidery, and her hair elaborately dressed and twisted with strings of jade and pearl. Long earrings frame a lovely, expressionless face, white with powder and vividly carmine on cheeks and lips. Her eyes are heavily black and droop wearily. She carries a peacock feather fan with a mirror in the handle. Behind the chair walk the two elderly governesses in drab-colored gowns as unprepossessing as their sharp yellowed faces. They carry rolls of manuscript and a servant behind holds a bright umbrella over them.)

THE BOY

The garden is empty, Celestialness; only an undergardener is here.

LI-TI

(Peering out)

My father and Poa-Ting-Fang were just walking through the paths. I wish I might catch a glimpse of them.

LING-TAI-TAI

It is not seemly.

LANG-TAI-TAI

It is not in comportment. It is curiosity!

(The little procession advances slowly around the pool.)

LANG

The five worst infirmities that afflict the female are

indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy and silliness. The worst of all and the parent of the other five is silliness. Your desire to see your honorable husband-to-be is silliness.

LING

Leave on the knees of the Gods the joy of your first sight of him. It comes soon enough.

(The bearers set down the chair.)

LI-TI

I have heard that he is old, and that he poisoned his brother so that he could take his estates, and that his brother's heir ran away from him.

LING

It is incredible that I hear these words in your mouth after our teaching.

LANG

Some sprouts do not blossom, some blossoms bear no seed. You are a stranger to us.

LI-TI

(She descends from her chair. She is very small and sways on her bound feet)

I am not myself. I am so soon to be some one else — the wife of a man that is old and greedy. I will drink only his will, and eat only his thoughts — he who I know poisoned his brother for money.

(The bearers arrange a low stool for LI-TI and the little boy holds an umbrella over her. The governesses take their place standing in

*front of her and unroll their long yellow scrolls.
They also have a boy to hold their umbrella.
The bearers take off the chair.)*

LING

Servants' chatter. Only girls and servants are hard to train. Draw near to them and they grow unruly; hold them off and they pay you with spite.

LANG

Remember that thou art young. What thou dost know is not to be compared with what thou dost not know.

LI-TI

It is common talk. Why then did his brother's only son and heir run away?

LING

Because he was a worthless ne'er-do-well and shamelessly preferred the freedom, as he called it, of vagabondage, to the honorable responsibility of his father's estate. That is common talk also.

LI-TI

Very like he did not care for the responsibility of such an uncle.

LANG

It ill fits your mouth to speak thus. If the shiftless Fang-Tai were to return and claim his lands before the allotted time when they legally belong to his uncle, you would not have a round penny as a wife.

LI-TI

Then my father would not have me be a wife at all.
That would be pleasing.

LING

Undutiful girl! Let us go to our lessons.
(*They unroll the long strips of parchment.*)

LANG

Your parent has instructed us to impart one more lesson in the histories of the flowers before you go to your husband to delight him with your knowledge. Recite, I pray you, the complete ancestry of the mari-gold.

LI-TI

(*In a singsong*)

Fathered first by our lord the Sun, whose sevenfold beams falling on the plant wove into curling petals, and then the sweet West Wind in passing from the bazaars of the great spice grove scattered in a pinch of — of — cinnamon —

LING

Fie, fie — a pinch of musk.

LI-TI

A pinch of musk, and Ku-Wu the bee with the golden stripes fashioned for it in the heart of the flower a pouch of tiny petals — so now — so now — Will Poa-Ting-Fang, my future husband, be angry with me? I have forgotten what comes next.

LING

He will rap the tips of your fingers and leave you alone in the pavilion. "So now the musk —"

LI-TI

I do not know. Let us go to the gilly-flower. That is not so hard.

LING

Fie! What is it the great Sage says about those who take the easy path?

LI-TI

"The stones will be slippery and they will twist their feet."

LANG

So now the musk —

(A runner enters who goes to the governesses.)

RUNNER

The Lord Wang-Chu would confer with you in the inner courtyard on a matter of immediate importance.

LANG

We come at once.

LING

(Thrusting a parchment into LI-TI's hands)

We return anon. Waste not the moments we are gone.

LANG

Listen not idly to the drone of the bees, or the dragonflies will sew up your ears.

LING

The list of the flowers is there. Read it well, and remember each in its place.

LANG

And there is the song of the willow flowers for the lute. Last time the notes sounded like a mouse on the strings.

(LING and LANG go out with the runner and their umbrella man. The gardener crosses and begins work on the beds about the pool.)

LI-TI

(In a very small voice as she strums her lute)

"O willow flowers like flakes of snow,
Where do your wandering legions go?
Little we care and less we know!
Our ways are the ways of the wind —
Our life in the whirl, and death in the drifts below."

(She turns to her little umbrella boy, who stands patiently first on one leg and then on the other.)

You twist so that your shadow flickers like a moth in the grass and drives the cadence out of my head. Go over there and rest — I do not mind the sun on my head.

(He marches over to a far corner, and curling up on the ground under his umbrella promptly falls asleep.)

LI-TI

(Running a finger through her eyelashes)

It is not seemly that he should see tears. (*She takes up the parchment.*) The green verberna is the herb that the willow nymph tried to crush into tea for her lover, and the fragrance of her hands — the fragrance of her hands — (*She buries her face in her hands.*)

TAI

(Humming at his clipping)

“Prone beside the Western stream,
In the liliated dusk I dream.
And mocking me the wind of spring
Such medley of perfume doth bring,
I cannot tell what fragrance blows,
Nor guess the lotus from the rose.”

LI-TI

(Standing up and looking across the flower beds)
Who is it sings when I wish to be sad?

TAI

It is I — Tai-Lo, the gardener.

LI-TI

You are the gardener? Approach.

(TAI-LO comes before her, basket on arm and bows low.)

LI-TI

Why do you have so many different kinds of flowers in the garden?

TAI

So they will bloom as varied and bright as the hem of your celestial skirt that brushes them as you pass.

LI-TI

I would have all one kind — all gillyflowers.

TAI

The garden would be a desert — brown and yellow — deadening to the eye.

LI-TI

I would like it. There would be less to learn.

TAI

You know the flower lore and yet would have the heart to turn them out of their homes?

LI-TI

Horrid, stiff, prickly things! Take them up and put in gillyflowers!

(TAI-LO *kneels with his trowel and puts one or two plants in his basket.*)

LI-TI

(*As she watches him, she strums carelessly on her lute*)

"Through the green blinds that shelter me,
 Two butterflies at play,
 Four wings of flame whirl joyously
 Around me and away,
 While swallows breasting to the shore
 Ripple the waves they wander o'er.
 And I that scan the distant view,
 Of torn white clouds and mountains blue —

TAI

(*Finishing it for her*)

Lift to the north my aching eyes —
 'Tis there — 'Tis there the city lies —
 Chang — An arise! Arise! "

LI-TI

You know that, too?

TAI

I am an exile. I know another wanderer song that
 might please you. (*He takes the lute.*)

"I was a child in Yung-Yang,
 A little child I waved farewell,
 After long years I dwell again
 In world forgotten Yung-Yang.
 Yet I recall my playtime,
 And in my dreams I see
 The little ghosts of Maytime
 Waving farewell to me.

"My father's house in Yung-Yang
 Has fallen upon evil days,

No kinsmen o'er the crooked ways
Hail me as once in Yung-Yang.
No longer stands the old Moot hall,
Gone is the market from the town.
The v^{er}y hills have tumbled down,
And stoned the valleys in their fall.
Yet I recall my playtime,
And in my dreams I see
The little ghosts of Maytime,
Waving farewell to me."

LI-TI

Do flowers have ghosts?

TAI

(Returning to his work)

Yes they are people. Poor little marigold lady!
(He holds up an uprooted plant.) She holds the lanterns of the garden. When the nights are dark she lights up the thick green jungle so the katydids can dance.

LI-TI

(She consults her paper)

That is not what I learned about the marigold. It is much prettier.

TAI

Ah, what you know, my lady, is the allegorical ancestry, very befitting one of your quality. But this is the true story of the flowers that the fairies prick on the leaves. And the golden cup that the dew king fills for the moon fairies. They will go thirsty after their dance to-night.

LI-TI

You need not pull up so many. What is the little white flower by your foot?

TAI

They are the slippers of the firefly elves left out to dry in the sun, but you mustn't tell any one.

LI-TI

And those tall green ones over there?

TAI

Hush! Mandarins — see their green caps?

LI-TI

And how solemnly they nod their heads!

TAI

And how the bees fly in and out telling them state secrets.

LI-TI

O how dear and funny! (*She peers over towards the high flowers.*) I wonder if the bees' wings tickle their ears — they buzz so — I wonder how it feels to have a bee tell you secrets.

TAI

(*Gravely*)

I can show you. This is the way. (*He kisses her behind her fan.*) Are you angry, celestial lady?

LI-TI

No — o. It must be rather nice to be a flower.

TAI

You are one.

LI-TI

I consider you only as a bee — in the garden.

TAI

A poor sort of vagabond, accountable to no one — flying in and out — not ever staying long enough to care — or have any one care —

LI-TI

You shall stay and tell me funny stories.

TAI

All my poor little bee secrets are yours, lady.

LI-TI

And sing songs about — Yung-Yang. O, I wish I had known there was a bee in the garden before!

TAI

The bee saw the flower over the wall.

LI-TI

Oh — I should not have been chattering and behaving in this unseemly fashion. Here come my honorable governesses. They will be so displeased if I am not occupied in a fitting manner. Go and send over the umbrella boy. I hope I have not faded in the sun. (*She takes up her lute. The umbrella boy returns to stand over her. TAI-LO goes back to his work.*)

"O willow flowers like flakes of snow,
Where do your wandering legions go?
Little we care and less we know —"

(She breaks off in a suppressed giggle that turns into a grave courtesy as the governesses hurry up. They are out of breath and excited.)

LING

The unheard of has occurred!

LANG

O most unfortunate of girls!

LING

The house of Mo can never smile again!

LI-TI

What is the matter? In what have I offended?

LING

Not you. It is that the great Poa-Ting-Fang, your future husband-to-be, while walking in this very garden — O wretched landscape — has lost his emerald ring!

LANG

It is of the honorable size of a pigeon's egg, and worth the price of a thousand silver mines.

LING

More valuable than all your dowry.

LANG

It holds in its secret chamber the seal of his house cut from the tomb of his first ancestor —

LING

Never has one of his house been without it!

LANG

And it slipped from his august finger while he picked those miserable flowers!

LING

But that is not the most calamitous! He vows he will depart in anger — that he will never look upon your face — if his ring is not returned. It is an ill omen and the two houses cannot come together under it.

LANG

The garden must be searched to the very seeds, or you will be scorned as a bride and the world will laugh at our rejected house!

LI-TI

It does not appal me — that he will not marry me.

LANG

In this garden it vanished — the ring worth sixty diamond mines! It was to be a signet of your marriage. How can he overlook the omen of its loss?

LING

Who has seen it? Who? Who?

LI-TI

There has been no one here but ourselves — and the gardener.

LANG

That is it. O merciful heaven that has delivered him into our hands. (*They approach TAI-Lo who bows. LI-TI wanders about looking in the beds.*)

LING

Your name?

TAI

Tai-Lo.

LANG

How long have you been here, and why did you come?

TAI

I have been gardener among your honorable flowers for twice seven days.

(*LI-TI stops to pick up something that glitters as she turns it in her hand.*)

LING

And before?

TAI

I wandered.

LANG

Ah!

LING

And your reason for coming?

TAI

(Watching LI-TI as she stands in the sunlight)

I liked the flowers in your garden.

LING

And you found them what you expected?

TAI

Better, excellencies. *(He bows.)**(With a furtive motion LI-TI crouches down and buries what she has found deep in the soft earth TAI-LO spaded up.)*

LING

Enough! Seize him!

LANG

"A flaw can be ground from a scepter white —
A slip of the tongue no man right."

LING

I am satisfied. "Unruly when young — unmentioned as man, undying when old — spells good-for-nothing."

LI-TI

(Coming between them)

No!

LANG

Your chair waits. In a moment your honorable father and the wronged Ting-Fang will be here to search the garden — and the gardener.

LI-TI

Untie him. He has not seen the ring.

LING

We shall see —

LANG

What we shall see.

TAI

There are ways of proving that I have not the ring.

LI-TI

(She has ascended her chair. She twists her hands nervously)

I — I — *(She looks at TAI.)* I will see that you are not found guilty.

TAI

Graciousness! "Richer the silver of your voice than in the hollow pojols that make moonlight about your ankles."

LING

"Honeyed words confound goodness."

LANG

"The vulgar always gloss their faults."

LING

Forward!

(The bearers carry off the chair, followed by the governesses under their umbrella. A man stays to guard TAI-LO.)

MAN

Where did you hide it?

TAI

What?

MAN

The ring.

TAI

I have not seen it.

MAN

I will take it safely out of the garden and we will go shares.

TAI

I tell you I have not seen it. It is fortunate for your master that I am gardener here instead of you.

MAN

Do you think I can believe you such a fool that you were working here on the very bed under his foot when the ring slipped from his finger and did not put your hand over it? Bah! Tell me where it is or I'll swear I saw you swallow it!

TAI

The only kind of fool I am not, is to tell anything to such a dirty knave as you.

MAN

(Imperturbably)

Everything you say will be used against you.

TAI

I have no doubt. "Trees are more upright than men."

MAN

"Money makes a blind man see."

(WANG-CHU-MO and POA-TING-FANG, under their umbrellas, come into the garden. They are followed by servants with rakes.)

WANG

(Directing the men)

Barely touch the surface of the earth — the slightest scratch may bury the ring beneath it as you work. And remember: you are held responsible if we fail. Oh, my honorable guest — and son-in-law that I hope you shall still be — would I could heap the unworthy dust of this garden on my head in apology.

FANG

It is indeed a calamity of unmitigated enormity. My ancestral jewel is of the size of a pigeon's egg and of the value of a thousand silver mines. (*He consults notebook.*) Whereas your daughter's dowry, I regret to say, does not possess its equivalent.

WANG

Its equivalent shall be found. Where is the gardener Lang-Tai-Tai told me of?

TAI-LO

Here.

(TAI-LO and POA-TING-FANG stare at each other.)

WANG

O wretched stork, what have you filched with your beak!

POA

I would question this man — alone.

(WANG goes off, fussily directing the men who scratch the flower beds with their rakes.)

POA

Fang-Tai!

TAI

My estimable uncle!

POA

What are you doing here?

TAI

I might better ask the same — what are *you* doing here — in my father's coat, and wearing — or, rather, being very careless, with my father's signet ring — while I, my father's heir, am still in a position to claim them? But I fear the question might inconvenience you —

POA

Very unsuitable.

TAI

We will let it pass since it is of my own free will that I wander. Be benign enough to assure these people that I am no thief and I say nothing.

POA

And how long do you continue saying nothing?

TAI

As long as my good pleasure and your good behavior.

POA

Am I to be at the beck and call and in constant fear of a paltry vagabond? Oh, my high-bred sensibilities! I shudder to my finger tips!

TAI

Most unsuitable of you, dear uncle. When my father died I chose some years of freedom to wander through the by-roads unhampered — and left you the freedom and the care of the estate. It was my favor that gave you these honors. It is not my fault if you assume too much — take too much — and force me to return.

POA

That was why you stole the ring — so that you could prove your estate instantly!

TAI

Your morals, my uncle, are odd. I take no such method.

POA

Bah! Hypocrisy!

TAI

I have seen that which makes me think I shall return in any case.

POA

Am I to give up my position — my hard-fought gains
— my improvements won by the sweat of my toil and
the clink of my gold —

TAI

My gold.

POA

To give place to you — you — a vagabond squanderer — a shiftless pleasure lover — who would waste and change and turn me into the laughing stock of the country?

TAI

No doubt.

POA

It is unthinkable — that I, — I should have to give way to a beardless ne'er-do-well. It is a thousand deaths! And I would give a thousand rings to have you dead, scourge of the worthy!

TAI

No doubt.

POA

You mock me — will you — monkey-eared frog — you —

TAI

Tell these people that I am no thief, and have done.

POA

They would not believe it.

TAI

I have around my neck the amulet, the duplicate of the sacred amulet in my father's ring. They will believe Tai-Fang.

POA

You cannot prove a grain of it. The amulet of a ragged gardener. It might be any stone.

TAI

The ring will be found and it fits there.

POA

I will throw the ring into the river before it is opened. I will grind it under my heel —

TAI

"The chase of gain is rich in hate —" My uncle, do you think there is a man on our estate who would not know me?

POA

But here — here they do not, and the word of a vagrant servant is the wind in the grass — empty. Whether the ring is found or not, I will say you confessed to stealing it. They will only be too eager to string you on the nearest branch to appease me. And what is one dead gardener more or less? By the sacred Gods that guard the cornice of our house, I will do it — unless you swear to go and never molest me again. You swear?

TAI

I do not.

POA

There will be trial and court in this very garden and you will be hung.

TAI

If it happens that I am not it will fare hard with you. How well I see now that "Gold is tested by fire and man by gold."

POA

You will never go out of that gate unless, when the rope is about your neck, you promise me on the grave of your ancestors —

TAI

You old thief! I'll see you strangled first! (*He tries to free his hands.*)

POA

(*Calling*)

My honorable father-in-law. This man is violent!
(*WANG hurries up.*)

WANG

He confesses?

POA

To having disposed of the ring. My astute questioning —

TAI

I do not.

WANG

Peace! Lest your tongue burn in your mouth.

POA

My intricate insinuations and subtle probes have brought the taste of guilt to his trembling mouth.

TAI

' You lie! My Lord Wang, if you know —

WANG

(*Angrily*)

I am about to know.

POA

He admits to having taken the jewel but as to where he has hid it, he has the cunning and secrecy of the weasel.

WANG

We will discover at once. O that I should have nourished such a viper in my garden!

POA

Eating your bread and lining his unworthy pockets with your silver. My unhappy friend, I indeed grieve for you.

WANG

It can be crushed out. Tread on the snake's head, and he will not bite.

POA

I truly believe that nothing would give me greater happiness than to see your garden spot cleared of all evil.

WANG

O most felicitous and generous guest! Truly "to rank the effort above the prize may be called Love." It shall be cleared of Evil —

TAI

One moment.

WANG

Your time to speak shall come.

POA

He should have only one moment. I am sincerely convinced that such is my friendship for you that immediate removal of this rascal — since he has in part confessed — would greatly tend to smooth my pride in the matter of the ring — and my feeling towards your daughter —

WANG

We will hold a court at once.

POA

Is that necessary, in a case of such confessed guilt?

WANG

(*Pompously*)

"When not in office I discuss not policy." I perform no deed that is not strictly in accordance with the mandates of the law — "Gentlemen cherish worth; the vulgar cherish dirt. Gentlemen trust in justice; the vulgar trust in favor," says Confucius. But this will be very summary — just a few ceremonies in this garden — we will not disturb the festivities outside.

POA

Most laudable intention. But no strangers I pray — no fuss — no scandal; of all things I deplore scandal — and were there outsiders I would feel it my painful duty to explain — my emerald seal —

WANG

No one but ourselves — and the men in this garden — to act also as executioners in case —

POA

Exactly and excellently planned. Worthy father-in-law, your scheme is as neat as a snail in its shell.

TAI

I claim the right to defendants.

WANG

(Pointing to the two guards)

These can be your defendants. They are your fellow servants and know the most about you here.

POA

Precise as a crab in its skin.

TAI

Some one from my own province —

POA

Question not your master's generosity, wretched fellow. Your past is best buried in obscurity.

WANG

Unhappy man, the crime was committed here.
Who more fitting than these witnesses?

POA

My father-in-law, the tea-leaf eyelids of the Sages
would quiver at your perfect comprehension and justice.

TAI

You will regret this.

POA

Very like. I am tender-hearted and ever hate to
witness suffering.

WANG

I depart to seek the law books. "To foster right
among the people — to honor the ghosts of the dead
while keeping aloof from them may be called Wisdom."

POA

For a theft of over a thousand gold pieces it is hanging,
is it not? My ring was worth twenty thousand.

WANG

That is the penalty.

POA

And that this should defile your garden! In my
grief for you I feel sorrow and desire for my ring
passing away. Is it not dangerous to leave these men
with the prisoner? He might confer falsely or even
divulge the hiding place of the ring, and they escape.

WANG

True. Is he well tied?

GUARD

Perfectly. (*TAI-LO is roped hand and foot.*)

WANG

He is as safe there as a clipped sparrow, and we will guard the gates. Come, men, you will be allowed to confer with the prisoner for his defense under our eyes. Ah, if all would hark to the words of the Sage — "Living on coarse rice and water with a bent arm for pillow, mirth may be ours, but ill-begotten wealth and honors are to me a wandering cloud."

POA

We are not all born with the righteousness of Confucius in our breath as you are, my esteemed father-in-law-to-be.

(*They walk out slowly*)

GUARD

(*In TAI-LO's ear*)

Tell me where it is — that ring —

TAI

You knave!

GUARD

Remember then — by Kong-Fu-Tsu, I'll say you swallowed it, and then — (*He makes the motion of ripping open TAI's body with a knife.*) It is not pleasant even with a sharp knife — and I doubt if they wait to hang you first.

WANG
(*Calling*)

Come here, you loiterers!

GUARD
I was but tightening the ropes.

(*The GUARDS go out.*)

(*LI-TI enters on tip-toe. She sways, and advances very slowly. Suddenly, very swiftly, she stoops and feels in a flower bed. TAI-LO whistles a little tune.*)

LI-TI
(*Her hands behind her*)
You are spying on me! Oh!

TAI
If you move your celestial path to another circle, I cannot see you.

LI-TI
Oh, poor gardener — you are bound! Does it hurt!

TAI
A little, but not so much as that you should see me so.

LI-TI
You do look funny! Ah, I did not mean that — I will see that you are unbound. I want to hear you talk again. I hate to see you so. Can't you move?

TAI
My position is honorably uncomfortable. Your

august father is pleased to accuse me of taking your estimable husband-to-be's ring.

LI-TI

But you did not. They were estimably in the *wrong*.

TAI

You believe I did not steal? Your words are as sweet as the song of the Fung-Noang, the wonder-birds.

LI-TI

Would it free you if the ring were found? If the emerald the size of a pigeon's egg and the value of sixty pagodas of pearl were to be spaded up in this flower-bed?

TAI

I am afraid not.

LI-TI

It would not matter?

TAI

You are pleased?

LI-TI

Oh, it is only a little matter — something to do with myself, and not at all important as your troubles are. It is only that if the ring were not found, I heard it said that Poa-Ting-Fang — my husband-to-be — would look upon me with frowning, and not take me to his house, but go away.

TAI

You do not want to marry him?

LI-TI

I have heard that he is old and ugly and stupid, and likes dry things to learn by rote instead of — of knowing nice pretty flower stories such as —

TAI

As I know?

LI-TI

Yes. But I must not take up all the time with this idle chatter of my affairs. There must be found a way to free you and then the ring will never be found. Oh, I would stamp it to pieces myself rather than that, and I would never have to learn any more stupid lists for Ting-Fang — only funny flower stories here in the garden with you, and we would be so happy and care-free. Wouldn't we?

TAI

It would be as a thousand springtimes. I wish it were possible.

LI-TI

Why not?

TAI

You yourself have poured water on the last spark of hope.

LI-TI

You think the ring could free you after all?

TAI

If anything. But speak not of that.

LI-TI

I must (*in a very faint voice*) ; and the ring shall be found.

TAI

I hope not, for your honorable sake. You will stay in the garden and talk to the bright lilies, and all the wicked lacquered goblins on the cornice of the house of Ting-Fang shall wriggle their fire-colored tongues in vain, for they shall not have you to eat.

LI-TI

But I should not like it if you were not here.

TAI

You think so? To-night even in the great citron light of sunset when the Three Councillors open their cold bright eyes in the Northern sky, you will have forgotten.

LI-TI

No! Your ghost would come to me.

TAI

Do not fear for me. "Those who have not tasted the bitterest of Life's bitters can never appreciate the sweetest of Life's sweets." And even if the emerald should be found growing like a celestial magic leaf upon these flower stems, there are those to say I hid it, and that is theft confessed.

LI-TI

But if some one else were to say he took it?

TAI

O jewel in the lotus, do you think others wait to hang in my stead?

LI-TI

(*Slowly*)

I could not live, and think that I had harmed you.

TAI

That is very kind.

LI-TI

You do not believe me? It is true!

TAI

Did you not just say, Almond Flower, that it was your happiness for the ring not to be found? That is proof.

LI-TI

When I think of going with that dreadful old man, it is like holding my hand in a crab's tooth. But a way will be found to free you. It must.

TAI

To argue with you, little one, is like throwing water in a frog's face.

LI-TI

Oh, you are so funny! Have I a face like a frog?

TAI

More like a lotus petal.

LI-TI

Ah, I cannot bear it! I must tell you — it is a secret —

TAI

Tell me. The dead have no tongues to wag.

LI-TI

Don't say it! Tai-Lo, you are not going to die!

TAI

That is nonsense. What is your secret?

LI-TI

•It is that I — Oh, I dare not — I cannot — (*She hides her face behind her fan.*)

TAI

Your esteemed father and his honorable guest your husband-to-be are approaching. It would not be seemly that they find you in converse with a prisoner.

LI-TI

(*Looking up steadily over her fan*)

Good-by. Tai-Lo.

TAI

Good-by.

(*LI-TI vanishes in the bushes.*)

(*WANG-CHU-MO and POA-TING-FANG enter, followed by servants bearing two high gilded chairs. Two others carry parasols, and another books, papers, and a long quill pen. One man has a heavy rope slung over his arm. At*

a reasonable distance the two governesses follow, whispering importantly under their umbrella. The bearers put down the chairs and WANG and POA ascends them, the umbrellas being held over their heads. A scribe sits cross-legged at their feet, with his materials spread before him. The governesses stand behind WANG's chair, and the servants in a row behind POA's. WANG motions for TAI-LO to be unbound. He comes to stand in front of the chairs.)

WANG

(Reading from a book)

"To leave untaught and then kill is cruelty; to ask full tale without warning is tyranny. To give careless orders and be strict when the day comes is robbery; to be stingy in rewarding men is littleness." Court is open. This man is accused of a theft surpassing the mark of ten thousand gold pieces. I being judge of this province may acquit him, or find him guilty. If he is found guilty, he may be hanged.

POA

(Fanning himself)

Most suitable, most suitable.

WANG

Who stands against this man?

POA

(Rising)

I do.

44 TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN

(Several of the servants bow, and the governesses come forward timidly.)

WANG

(Speaking to the SCRIBE)

Put down the names.

POA

Of us all —

WANG

Yes, all except those two. *(He points to the two guards of TAI-LO.)* They are to speak for the prisoner.

POA

(Coldly)

Ah, those. *(He leans over to them.)* Merely technical, my men, I assure you. There will be no penalty attached for you if your — ah — client — is found guilty.

TAI

I will speak for myself.

GUARD

(In his ear)

And what have you to say to me?

TAI

That you can go to the devil.

(The guard whispers vindictively.)

TAI

You blackguard! *(He falls on the man, half knock-*

*ing him down, and is pulled back by the other guard.
WANG and POA both rise. The governesses scream.)*

WANG
(*Shrilly*)

Stop it there! How dare you, vagrant beetle that you are, interrupt and insult the honor of the court before my eyes! Oh, lamentable viciousness!

POA
Scandalous!

WANG
(*Sinking back in his chair, the guards having pulled
TAI-LAO back*)

An execrable beginning.

POA
Contemptible. To maul his very fellow defendant!

TAI
It is not as you think, Lord Wang; if you will hear me, this man —

POA
Out of order. (*Fanning.*) Tales, tales.

WANG
Out of order, certainly! and there is nothing to excuse your incredible actions. "The people are the root of a country, if the root is firm, the country will be tranquil; if the root is rotten, the country breaks like a house with a cracked floor."

GUARD

I refuse to answer for this man. I want to accuse him —

POA

Very proper spirit, very proper.

GUARD

I can tell you —

WANG

All in appropriate time. Put his name down there.
(*He raps sharply on the arm of his chair with his fan.*)
Proceed! We will omit the formalities and come to the accusations.

SCRIBE

(*Reading from his papers in a high singsong*)

The gardener, Tai-Lo, is accused of theft in the third degree of —

POA

Time presses.

WANG

Come to the list of evidence.

SCRIBE

First: He was known to be alone in the garden when the great and honorable Lord Poa-Ting-Fang lost his most precious emerald ring — clear as the sunset after rain — of the size of a pigeon's egg — and the value of ten thousand silver mines. He was seen to work under the very feet of the great Poa-Ting-Fang as the ring slipped from his finger —

TAI

If he knew when it fell, why did he not pick it up?

WANG

Again, silence.

POA

Note that down — if he knew — if he knew.
(*Making a note in his book.*)

SCRIBE

Second: He confessed openly to have been a wandering beggar and questionable character before his entering as a gardener only a few days before the notable Poa-Ting-Fang was due for a visit, and he admitted in the access of his unworthy triumph that he had found the gleanings of the garden even more than he had expected.

LING

That we found out —

LANG

He admitted it to us.

POA

Most admirable example of female intelligence!

LING

(*To LANG, as they settle back*)

"A man thinks he knows, but a woman knows better."

SCRIBE

Third: The guilty one is known to have confessed!

to taking the ring — into the august ear of Poa-Ting-Fang himself.

POA

Is that not sufficient?

SCRIBE

Though, being as a weasel in his ways, he will not confess where he has hid away the jewel. (*He rolls up his paper, and sits down.*)

TAI

Poa-Ting-Fang has made my confession incomplete because he does not know any more than I do where the ring is.

POA

Does the court permit this slander on my person?

WANG

We will hear the man though his ridiculous insinuations are hardly worth the attentions of our august ear. "But he who contains himself goes seldom wrong," says the wise man. We will listen though it be wind in our ears.

POA

"Politeness before force."

TAI

I have not seen the ring.

POA

That is an — ah — inaccuracy. The person has seen the jewel on this very hand, flashing in the sun

before his greedy eyes — as I walked in the garden. Could any one have overlooked the sacred emerald of the house of Fang? Of the value of five hundred Ming vases all fragile as the wings of a moth? His statement is worthless.

TAI

Yes, my uncle, my esteemed and proud relative, I have seen the ring — on my father's finger it was — my father — whose estates you will steal to your own ends — seen it with my eyes — the eyes of Fang-Tai — my father's son.

POA

His guilt has gone to his head. Too bad, too bad. "Memory makes dizzy his thought like the perfume of some venomous flower."

WANG

What proof have you for this monstrous impertinence?

TAI

"When a bird is to die his note is sad, when a man is to die, his words are true." Do you deny that I am your nephew, Lord Ting-Fang?

POA

Most certainly. My Lord Wang-Mo, do you permit this man to question whether I know my own nephew? Indeed "if the tongue have no fear, words are hard to make good."

WANG

Consider which way your tongue goes. How can you utter such an assertion?

POA

"The charioteer of Resolve has lost control of the wild team of Fancy."

GOVERNESSES

(Behind their fans)

Very pretty — very pretty.

(POA smiles indulgent ly.)

TAI

(Holding out an amulet that is a string about his neck)

I have here the perfect duplicate of the sacred amulet of the house of Fang, the secret seal of our ancestors, given only to the first sons of our house.

POA

Very unlikely.

TAI

And any man from our province would know me — I can tell you the secret and inmost furnishings of our palace —

POA

The man must have a whole band of accomplices to lie for him.

GOVERNESSES

"Evil is not hermit. It has ever neighbors."

POA

Exact and just.

TAI

Do you deny, Poa-Ting-Fang, that in the hidden corner of your chamber —

POA

Whose word is to be taken — this vagabond's or mine? Are my household gods to be dragged out and shamed before the whole countryside — and in the mouth of every lying rascal? I have said that he is a thief. My word is used as carelessly as a lead penny. (*He rises.*) This court shall keep me no longer. I will go forth, and say that it is no court.

WANG

My most exalted guest, your word is as valuable as a ruby. Into a court is sifted both chaff and grain. We must winnow all. Be satisfied that the affair will be settled here — and take it no further. (POA *sits himself.*)

POA

(*Sulkily*)

“Long visits make short compliments.”

WANG

You have an amulet?

POA

Like most gardeners — apes are we all.

GOVERNESSES

Yes, yes, apes.

WANG

Speak slowly — and take heed of your words — concerning it. The offense is great. How can you prove your assertion here and now?

TAI

The amulet is cut so cunningly that it fits into a hidden part of the ring of our house.

POA

And the ring is lost! Very neat, very neat.

WANG

You testify to your own guilt.

TAI

I dare you to find the ring, Poa-Ting-Fang.

GUARD

He can't do it! He can't do it!

WANG

Why not?

GUARD

(*Pointing to TAI-LO*)

Because he's swallowed it!

ALL

Swallowed it!

TAI

That — that is too absurd!

GUARD

(*Vindictively*)

When he knew he was caught — he did it — to hide his guilt —

TAI

And how do you prove that?

GUARD

(*Significantly*)

There is one way to prove it — quick and sure.

WANG

This is most distressing!

POA

Most shocking to my delicate sensibilities —

GUARD

Will you hang him first? My Lord, does such a liar deserve it?

POA

Perhaps the guard is right — and since the man claims to exalted ancestry, however knavish his assertions, that is a more — ah — aristocratic way of — ah committing suicide. But, oh, my tender perceptions.

WANG

I must complete my duty and the law.

GUARD

*(Delightedly producing a knife in one hand and a rope
in the other)*

Have I your august permission to —

(The bushes part suddenly and LI-TI appears.)

LI-TI

(Shrilly)

No!

WANG

My daughter!

POA

My future bride! *(He modestly hides his face behind his fan.)*

WANG

This is the culmination of unseemliness! Unhappy girl!

LI-TI

(Prostrating herself)

I will walk in obedience all my life. I will be faithful and light lanterns before all the household gods, and obey your slightest eyelid quiver as your most subservient and unworthy wife, my Lord Ting-Fang, but I cannot live and know that such a crime was done in my name.

WANG

In your name?

LI-TI

Oh, a thousand pardons, most august and best of

fathers — ten thousand, O most exalted husband-to-be — but I with my miserable eyes had never beheld the countenance of my Lord Ting-Fang — and knew that he could care naught for one so lowly as I — and I found — O, a million apologies, most celestial ones — that my unworthy heart was not with him — that it lay in the hand of another — and when I heard — from all mouths that my Lord Ting-Fang would not have me if his ring were not found — I thought only of myself in my unhappiness — and I saw the ring where it lay fallen in our most unworthy garden, slipped from his august finger — and I stole it.

WANG

You!

LI-TI

Yes. Cover me with a thousand confusions. Bury me forever in the cold cells of the sacred Pagoda. But do not harm Tai-Lo. (*She holds out her hand.*) Here it is.

POA

(*Coming suddenly down from his chair*)

Let me see.

TAI

(*Forestalling him, and covering the ring with his hand*)

No.

LING

(*Catching a sleeve of LI-TI and pulling her back*)

Little spider — is this how you reward our teaching!

LANG

(Pulling her by the other sleeve)

"The five worst infirmities that afflict women are —"

WANG

Peace.

TAI

Behold; my Lord Wang. *(He holds the ring and his amulet together in his hand.)*

WANG

Complete. How strange indeed are the Gods!

TAI

There will now be time to prove more —

POA

(With a majestic wave of his hand)

My worthy and honorable Lord Wang-Chu-Mu, and others that are here, I admit that this person is unfortunately my nephew. I admit that I denied him before you. I admit that I would rather have my tender, high-strung sensibilities racked to their core as they would have been by the shedding of my own flesh and blood and the thrice regrettable demise of my unfortunate nephew than to have the lands of my ancestors ravaged and the gods of my household profaned by falling into the hands of a profligate and a waster. But through the interruption of, I may say with a blush, your unmaidenly daughter, all this cannot be. But the hem of my skirt will be clear of it from now on. I resign my lands into the hands of

this rascal, preferring that they perish quickly and without the open scandal of a lawsuit with such as he. And you, Wang-Mu, I congratulate you that you have not had the inconvenience of having your daughter returned to you, as she surely must have been had I seen her in my house. I leave her to my nephew. I fear they are only too well suited to each other. I have the pleasure of bidding you an honorable farewell. And try, I beg you, though I fear it will be difficult, to remember that "A gentleman is consistent and changeless and a combination of art and nature well blent."

(He moves off with great dignity, signing to a man to follow him with an umbrella. All bow.)

WANG

Alas! Like the famous man, "He wears a mask of love but his deeds belie it."

LING

Such a splendid creature!

LANG

Like the full moon his face, with eyebrows like swallows' wings —

TAI

My uncle has always dignity and discretion.

WANG

Completely polite.

(POA-TING-FANG disappears.)

TAI

May I have the honor of suggesting that I am now as my uncle — though undoubtedly somewhat less august and complete in my gifts — and stand in the most exalted shoes of your son-in-law-to-be?

WANG

I will consult the law upon that most desirable point. My garden is yours, and my house — and all that I have.

(He goes off slowly, followed by the scribe, chair and the others. All bow deeply.)

TAI

(To LI-TI)

So that was your secret?

LI-TI

(Prostrating herself)

Oh, most honorable lord, forgive my boldness.

TAI

(Lifting her to him)

You would have sacrificed yourself so no harm should come to me. It gives faith to a poor vagabond to take up the works of his ancestors again.

(The bearers come back with LI-TI's chair. She ascends it.)

TAI

I shall remember that the first day I saw you was the birthday of a thousand flowers, and each succeeding day will be the unfolding of a new petal.

LI-TI

Oh, most honorable one! I will have no more secrets from you — I will tell you all.

TAI

In a garden — where there are plenty of bees. (*He bows. The bearers carry off her chair. LING and LANG follow.*)

(As the chair reaches the opposite of the pool LI-TI leans out and throws him a kiss. TAI-LO follows them out slowly, humming the same tune as when he first came into the garden.)

60 TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN
FOR OUTDOOR PRODUCTION
OF
TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN

Any garden could be used for this play.

To make it appear Chinese, large flat gray silhouettes, cut to represent the stone lanterns and pagoda ornaments so often seen in Chinese gardens could be easily made, and placed about.

It is pretty to have a little walk or vista down which the processions can come on entering the garden. The bright colored costumes are very effective against the green.

For amateur production, Chinese costumes and properties are easy to find, and the coolie costumes can be very effective with soft colored smocks and peaked straw hats.

FOR INDOOR PRODUCTION

A simple scene would be —

A white wall extends across the back of the stage, with a little red door let in on one side, through which the characters enter into the garden. The top of the wall is colored with a band of scarlet, blue and gold tiles, and perhaps the curving scarlet tip of a Chinese roof shows over the top of the wall against the vivid blue sky. The grass in the garden is very bright green, with a little pebble path running through it, and prim flower beds against the wall, and in the foreground, brilliant, stiff flowers. On either side, stunted, Chinese pines, in lacquered pots. For ornament, two red lacquered sitting Chinese dogs guarding the door in the wall.

TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN

NOTES ON COSTUMES AND SCENERY FOR AMATEURS

COSTUMES

Poa-Ting-Fang and Wang-Chu-Mo as high Chinese dignitaries should have long embroidered silk coats and skirts. These can usually be borrowed, or else rented from any costumer. Their hats can be made very effectively of circular rims about four inches wide of red cardboard cut to stand out from the face, with a gold Chinese character painted in front, and a silk tassel hanging over the side from a button on top of the crown of the hat, which is made of close-fitting black silk or a stocking cap. Their shoes should be embroidered Chinese if possible, and they should carry black and gold paper Chinese fans. If the embroidered costumes are not possible, coats and skirts cut in voluminous Chinese pattern from plain bright yellow or green or purple silk lining material or even paper muslin, and decorated front and back with a dragon or Chinese Character design carefully copied from some reliable picture, and painted on with black and gold can be quite effective. The shoes could be straw sandals or leather slippers—but in no case use ordinary heeled shoes. The chief point is to have these costumes look authentically Chinese as well as picturesque in color and outline, and particular care should be taken to make the details harmonious no matter how simple or how elaborate the costume.

Li-Ti as a Chinese Great Lady should also have elaborately embroidered coat and trousers, but if this is not possible, coat and trousers can be cut of plain silk in green or yellow or scarlet or blue, and a Chinese Dragon or Flower design applied in gold or contrasting colors back and front of the jacket. It is very simple to make her a gold Chinese headdress by cutting the correct design out in cardboard, and gilding it, and

trimming it with flowers and tassels at each side. But if this is found unbecoming or at all cumbersome she can wear her hair (which of course must be smooth and black) parted in the middle, drawn into coils at each side with flowers at the back or over her ears. She also must have embroidered Chinese slippers. She can wear as much jewelry as is found attractive, but it must be in harmony and at least look Chinese even if it is not genuinely so. Her make-up must be very elaborate with a great deal of care and formality in the making.

Ling-Tai-Tai and Lang-Tai-Tai, the governesses, can either wear less elaborate embroidered robes than Li-Ti, or coats and skirts cut from purple, blue or grey silk or cloth. Their headdresses can be cut from cardboard also, painted silver and decorated with long hanging tassels. These headdresses should be copied from some authentic old Chinese picture, otherwise they may be ridiculous.

Pages and Scribe. These can be simply costumed in coat and trousers of some bright plain color, with heraldic Chinese Dragon or Character design back and front. They wear close-fitting black silk caps with button on top and a long black queue—which can be made of plaited black cloth, and tied at the bottom with strings of scarlet and yellow. The smaller the Pages are the prettier the effect. They can wear colored leather slippers or straw sandals.

Tai-Lo wears the soft colored long smock-like shirt, and rolled-up cotton trousers of a coolie. His hat presents the only difficulty, and that should be a real Chinese straw coolie's hat, either hired, or bought in Chinatown. It should be somewhat different in shape, size, etc., from the hats of the other workers. He has the long queue, and either bare feet or straw sandals.

Coolie Runners, Bearers, etc. These wear soft color cotton smocks and trousers and Chinese straw

hats. These are always very effective and with the long black queue are all that is needed to characterize the costume. They have bare feet.

PROPERTIES

The Parasols are the most effective bit of scenery one could have in a garden, but in no case must they be confused with Japanese parasols. They must be the real Chinese glazed and ribbed umbrellas or the effect of all the costuming is spoiled. Chinese parasols, or copies, are easy to find or to buy and are always useful afterwards.

The Fans must also be real Chinese, and not confused with the Japanese more common paper fan which will be instantly recognized as wrong by any discerning person. Li-Ti should have a peacock feather fan—(can be bought very reasonably in Chinatown) and the others as carefully chosen authentic fans as possible.

If Tai-Lo is to carry **a basket** it must be of real Chinese weave. It is very picturesque to have him carry two of these as he first enters the garden. They can be slung by ropes on the ends of a light bamboo pole which he carries over one shoulder.

Chairs for Court Scene. These must be very simple. In one production they were most effective made of plain boxes, with straight high boards for backs, painted a brilliant lacquer yellow, with black Chinese Characters on them and grotesque painted Chinese mask heads cut and painted on cardboard for their heads. However, unless some real effect like this can be achieved, simple boxes, lacquered scarlet or black, are far better than the wrong sort of chair.

The Palanquin is not difficult to make. It can be made of a plain chair firmly nailed between two strong poles. A light square frame of thin wood laths is built over the chair and curtained back, front

and sides, with Chinese embroideries or silk curtains. Li-Ti sits cross-legged on the chair and four bearers can carry it easily. It is pretty to have Chinese cornices cut from stiff cardboard, lacquered black, scarlet and gold and put on the corners. Of course the Palanquin is not necessary, but it is very effective.

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The theme of this play is the coming of a new student to the college, her reception by the scholars, her trials and final triumph.

There are three especially good girls' parts, Letty, Madge and Estelle, but the others have plenty to do. "Punch" Doolittle and George Washington Watts, a gentleman of color, are two particularly good comedy characters. We can strongly recommend "The New Co-Ed" to high schools and amateurs.

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A brand new comedy in four acts, by Marion Short, author of "The New Co-Ed," "Tempest and Sunshine," and many other successful plays. 4 males, 7 females. The scenes are extremely easy to arrange; two plain interiors and one exterior, a garden, or, if necessary, the two interiors will answer. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

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